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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001780

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: SPLM OUTLINES RISKY STRATEGY OF BRINKSMANSHIP WITH  
NCP

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1758  
[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1709

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: CDA met November 15 with SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum. Amum said the SPLM could no longer afford to play the National Congress Party's (NCP) game, which is just to play for time in talks over implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in order to continue to wear down and discredit the SPLM. Accordingly, the SPLM is now resolved to push hard for a commitment by the NCP to fully implement the CPA, including the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) Report. If the NCP refuses to budge, Amum said the SPLM is ready to provoke a constitutional crisis by permanently pulling out of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and declaring the NCP in violation of the constitution. The SPLA would first offer to keep the oil fields flowing. However, if the NCP refused to share oil revenues with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS), the SPLM is willing and able to shut down oil production in the South. He recognized that this strategy could lead to a renewal of the North-South war, but added that the SPLA has never been stronger. CDA cautioned that the high-stakes strategy Amum had described was a very dangerous game, with great potential for miscalculation by one side or the other. Amum agreed with that evaluation and urged the USG to keep up the pressure on the NCP to implement the CPA, and to involve the international community, especially IGAD partners and the UNSC, so that the SPLM does not have to take the riskier option. End Summary.

SPLM: "The past is littered with broken agreements"

[1](#)2. (C) CDA Fernandez met with Amum at SPLM headquarters in Khartoum for the first time since the suspension of the six-man committee talks to implement a CPA compromise (reftel b). Amum described the present political situation in Sudan as a crisis caused by the non-implementation of the CPA, with the potential for the country to disintegrate. He described the NCP's strategy as the product of its traditional way of treating its partners. The historical pattern for the "pathological" NCP upon signing an agreement is to immediately begin using every means to divide, discredit and destroy its partner. This is the only way the NCP knows how to survive, he said. "The past is littered with broken agreements," citing the cases of Southerners Riek Machar, Lam Akol, Northerner Sadiq al-Mahdi and Darfuri Mini Minawi, as examples.

13. (C) The SPLM had been careful to build "organic guarantees" into the CPA. These guarantees included the SPLM maintaining its own separate, standing army and maintaining its identity as an independent political organization "capable of mobilizing all the people of Sudan," Amum said. Another was to have built a role for international guarantors into the CPA. The result was not confederation, but in fact "the system we have is two countries in one." If President Bashir wants to go to Southern Sudan today, he has to get the SPLM's approval. The NCP's idea of unity is to slowly eliminate the SPLM and eventually reoccupy the South, he said.

SPLM offer rejected  
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14. (C) As a way out of the crisis, the SPLM had offered to the NCP a deal: "We told them that if they want to survive, there's another way." If the NCP wants to win the elections, the SPLM is ready to guarantee its leadership by being their allies. The SPLM would support the NCP candidate for president, not run its own candidate, would support the NCP in parliament and "reintroduce the NCP to the Sudanese people." The SPLM would work with the NCP to make unity attractive to the South so the people of Southern Sudan will vote for the NCP. They would "hold the NCP's hand," walk them up to the U.S. Government and tell them that the NCP is now a reputable party, so sanctions could be lifted. In return, the SPLM would expect the NCP to fully implement the CPA, accept the ABC, give the South its share of the oil money, and withdraw its troops from the South. In effect, Amum said, the SPLM is only asking for the NCP to fulfill its part of the bargain. Nevertheless, the NCP rejected the offer. "They think they can have it all," he stated.

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South Sudan "never been more prepared for war"  
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15. (C) Faced with that refusal, Amum insisted, the SPLM may have to withdraw permanently from the GNU, and "declare the government to be unconstitutional, illegal." The result would be a constitutional crisis, Amum said. The SPLM would retreat to its southern bastion and would offer to keep the oil flowing, and to put the revenue into an account to share with the North. If the NCP refused to share the oil revenues, the SPLM was ready and in a strategic position to shut down oil production. Amum said the SPLM now has troops deployed around the oil production areas and cutting oil flow would be relatively easy.

16. (C) Amun also said that the SPLM could mobilize millions on the streets of Khartoum to confront the NCP in this scenario. "Six million - happy - people turned out for Dr. John Garang in 2005, we can do the same only this time they would be angry." He noted that the SPLM was not alone now and had allies among the Nuba and Funj, among the people of Darfur.

17. (C) In this dire scenario, the SPLM would face the loss of oil revenues by telling its people that there would be no salaries, and "we would have to go back to a voluntary system" of a wartime economy. He added that a unilateral declaration of independence is not out of the question either. In response to the CDA's question whether the North was in a better position to borrow money to weather such a crisis, Amum said that "it's now easier for us to borrow money. The Chinese, the Indians and the Malaysians know their interests lie in the South. We would tell the Chinese that if you want to return after the war, give us one billion now. I think the Chinese will give us the money."

18. (C) The CDA cautioned that this is an extremely risky strategy, Amum agreed and said that "Southern Sudan has never been so prepared for war as now." In his view it is better

to confront the NCP now, when the SPLM/A is strong than after it has been fatally weakened by months of slow bleeding. The CDA acknowledged that the NCP's strategy in negotiating amounts to the proverbial "death by a thousand cuts." He warned that part of the NCP's strategy will be to isolate the SPLM, including from the USG. He urged the SPLM to keep the lines of communication with the U.S. open and to be very careful about unintended escalation.

Amum's request to U.S.: Keep up the Pressure  
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19. (C) In reply, Amum said the SPLM believes the U.S. can help the South. The only way out of the crisis, he said, is to keep up intense pressure on the NCP to implement the CPA now, "in the next few months". He urged working with the IGAD partners for an urgent meeting, and suggested that the UN Security Council ask the two partners to report on progress. "External action is effective," he said, adding that the SPLM's room for maneuver with the NCP is extremely limited. He noted that such international activity would dissuade the SPLM from taking some of these more dire steps he described.

110. (C) COMMENT: We have never heard such a clear (and disturbing) statement of the SPLM's current crisis strategy. Although supposedly Salva Kiir's policy, these ideas reek of the tortured, brilliant and apocalyptic mind of Pagan himself. The party correctly senses the consequences of continuing to play the NCP's game of talking the CPA to death. If the SPLM were to play along with nothing to show for its efforts, it would progressively weaken its support in the South. The party now feels pushed to engage in a very high-stakes game of brinkmanship with the NCP. In this game, the potential for one or both parties to miscalculate is great. We share Amum's conviction that the only way out of the present crisis is for the NCP to re-commit to implementing the CPA but believe he exaggerates the SPLM's ready ability to outmaneuver the NCP, who are also effective, dirty and ruthless players. The potential for miscalculation is great and we must continue to advise both parties to contain their rhetoric, negotiate an early settlement - with external assistance if necessary - and engage fully in implementation of the CPA. The alternative could be

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disastrous for both Northern and Southern interests and the future stability of Sudan. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ